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| **Regional Preparatory Meeting for WTDC-17 for Europe (RPM-EUR)**  | P:\SUP\Logos\Post-150th Anniv\ITU-logo-UNblue.jpg |
| **Vilnius, Lithuania, 27-28 April 2017** |
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| **Serbia (Republic of)** |
| PROPOSAL OF NEW REGIONAL INITIATIVE ON ACCELERATING EFFECTIVE DIGITIZATION ACROSS EUROPE |
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| **Priority area:**Priority setting for Regional Initiatives, related projects and financing mechanisms**Summary:**The Republic of Serbia is in the process of launching an extensive process of digitization, including the digitization of the national cultural heritage and contemporary art. This process raises several technical and implementation challenges and opportunities that need to be supported through international expertise and a series of case studies in order to facilitate effective digitization across Europe. As several countries are going through this process currently a new regional initiative is proposed to assist countries in need and help administrations to accelerate the process of digitization.This is a proposal to build national and regional capacities necessary for accelerating the process of digitization.**Expected results:**RPM-EUR is requested to examine this document.**References:**WTDC Resolution 17 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) |

**Background**

The digitization of the national cultural heritage and contemporary art in the Republic of Serbia is a vital issue of our cultural policy, and even the question of survival of our cultural and historical community. Digitized and adequately reflected cultural heritage and contemporary art should contribute to the preservation of national identity of our region, as well as improving the position of our country on a global scale. The Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Serbia will conduct a process of digitization so that digitalized cultural material allows its research and application in the field of culture, education, information and communication technology, tourism and other sectors. Digitization of the national cultural heritage and contemporary art is a comprehensive process that includes long-term preservation of national cultural heritage, multimedia presentation and reliable access to digitized material, as well as the optimal and safe use of this material for various purposes without any restrictions which would have a direct impact on the economic development of the country.

The process of digitization follows the principles and standards defined at national level and relevant international recommendations in order to achieve interoperability. Existing national strategies in relevant areas are [Information Society Development Strategy in the Republic of Serbia until year 2020](http://www.srbija.gov.rs/extfile/sr/135791/strategija_razvoja_informacionog_drustva0288_cyr.zip), [Strategy on Development of Electronic Communications in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2010-2020.](http://www.gs.gov.rs/doc/strategije/strategija_elektronske_komunikacije0315_cyr.zip) The legal framework for the digitization is the Law on Culture[[1]](#footnote-1) which defines the strategy of digitizing cultural heritage and contemporary creativity as general interest, the Law on Cultural Property[[2]](#footnote-2) (to be changed and adopted by 2018), the Law on Library and Information Service[[3]](#footnote-3), the Law on Archive Material (that should be adopted by June 2017). The project of digitization is in the form of Strategy with Action Plan, which is part of the Strategy for the Development of Culture of the Republic of Serbia from 2017 to 2027. The development strategy of digitizing cultural heritage and contemporary art, involves achieving the objectives set for the period 2017-2027, will largely result in a levelling of the current gaps in the procurement and use of modern information and communication technologies, work on training staff in cultural institutions and the real needs for digitization of cultural heritage and contemporary creativity.

Building upon this national experience, a series of challenges related to the digitization have been identified that require further investigation, comparative studies and assistance by experts and consultants. It would help all countries being on the similar development path to have a better starting point for a process of digitization. In particular, focus should be given to:

* relevant recommendations of the technical, organizational and strategic (guidelines) on how to optimally organize the digitization process, including drafting digitization strategies and projects;
* elaboration of appropriate guidelines, comparative studies;
* practices for adaptation and implementation of standards for digitization and processing;
* building resilient systems for digitized content and its long-term preservation as necessity for successful implementation of digitization .

**PROPOSAL**

**Title of New Regional Initiative:** Accelerating effective digitization across Europe

**Objective:** To build national and regional capacities necessary for accelerating the process of digitization.

**Expected Results:** To assist countries in need in the following:

* Develop a set of best practices and implementation experiences of the countries currently going through the process of digitization.
* Provide regional platform for exchange of practices, while building human capacities and expert networks across the region.
* Provide technical, organizational and strategic advice on how to optimally implement the digitization process.
* Take stock of existing technical solutions and emerging technologies accelerating digitization and digital transformation.
* Elaborate digitization strategies and action plans.
* Develop projects.

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1. <http://www.kultura.gov.rs/cyr/dokumenti/propisi-iz-oblasti-kulture/law-on-culture> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.kultura.gov.rs/cyr/dokumenti/propisi-iz-oblasti-kulture/cultural-property-law> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.kultura.gov.rs/cyr/dokumenti/propisi-iz-oblasti-kulture/law-on-library-and-information-service> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)